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**TIMOTHY J. WALZ**  
**CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES**  
**FIRST DISTRICT, MINNESOTA**  
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Oversight

September 14, 2007

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to thank you for your efforts to help southeastern Minnesota recover from the devastating heavy rains and flash floods that occurred on August 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007 and to urge you to take additional steps to aid the affected communities, including releasing funds from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

In the days after the floods, you traveled to Minnesota and met with local elected officials, including myself, for a briefing on the flood and the recovery effort. It was evident from our meeting that you understood the severity of the flood and the importance of federal support in the rebuilding effort.

Thank you for your prompt action in issuing a Presidential Disaster Declaration for the affected counties, which helped expedite the cleanup and rebuilding process for many Minnesotans. Local, state and federal officials have worked hand-in-hand to respond to this disaster and I have been pleased at the cooperation and coordination that have marked this response so far.

However, challenges still remain. Many flood-affected residents of southern Minnesota must replace damaged heating and cooling systems. Others must find a way to pay their utility bills despite the loss of a job or a significant reduction in income. The need for reliable home heating systems is particularly important in Minnesota, where the winters can be hard and last for months.

To address these challenges, I respectfully request that you release funds from the LIHEAP contingency fund for flood victims in Minnesota.

The LIHEAP contingency fund currently has a \$131.5 million balance that will expire on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007, unless the money is released. As you know, these funds may be used to help individuals recovering from a natural disaster replace damaged utility systems or pay their home heating bills.

Following Hurricane Katrina, your Administration released LIHEAP contingency funds to affected residents in four states; in 1999, the Clinton Administration did so to help affected residents in North Carolina following flooding from Hurricane Floyd. With seven counties declared federal disaster areas and tens of millions of dollars in estimated damages, the scope of the flooding in southeastern Minnesota warrants the release of LIHEAP contingency funds as well.

Mr. President, given the great need for assistance in southeastern Minnesota, it would be a tragic missed opportunity if the money available in the LIHEAP contingency fund were to expire unused. I urge you to make these funds available and I look forward to continuing to work with you to help southeastern Minnesota recover.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim J. Walz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tim" and last name "Walz" clearly distinguishable.

Tim J. Walz  
Member of Congress